Skiing

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Written by Herbert I. Kavet

Illustrated by Marc Dabagian

From Mario.
Honeymoon basket
2002

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SKIING

Written By:
Herbert I. Kavet

Illustrated By:
Marc Dabagian

For Gregg and Matt.

When they were little, I carried them up and down the mountain.
Now, when they're not racing, they mostly wait for me at the lift.

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How the Book Was Written

All Herb Kavet's books are handwritten with a #2 pencil. They are not cranked out on a PC or other kind of computer. Mr. Kavet does not own a computer and if he did, he would not know how to turn it on. If he did know how, he would surely erase every word he'd ever written. Much of this book was written on chairlifts with a frozen hand and a soggy little notebook. He feels strongly that anyone skiing slower than him is a turkey and anyone skiing faster is an asshole.

Finding a Ski Area

Every year the ski magazines have big surveys to rate all the areas and the one with the highest score based on all these surveys is declared the best one in the country. The surveys rate equally all the important factors affecting skiing like: size of parking lot, number of toys in the nursery, courtesy at the rental place, ice skating facilities, ambiance of the toilets (including inches of standing water on the floor) and how easy it is to get a date after 8 p.m.

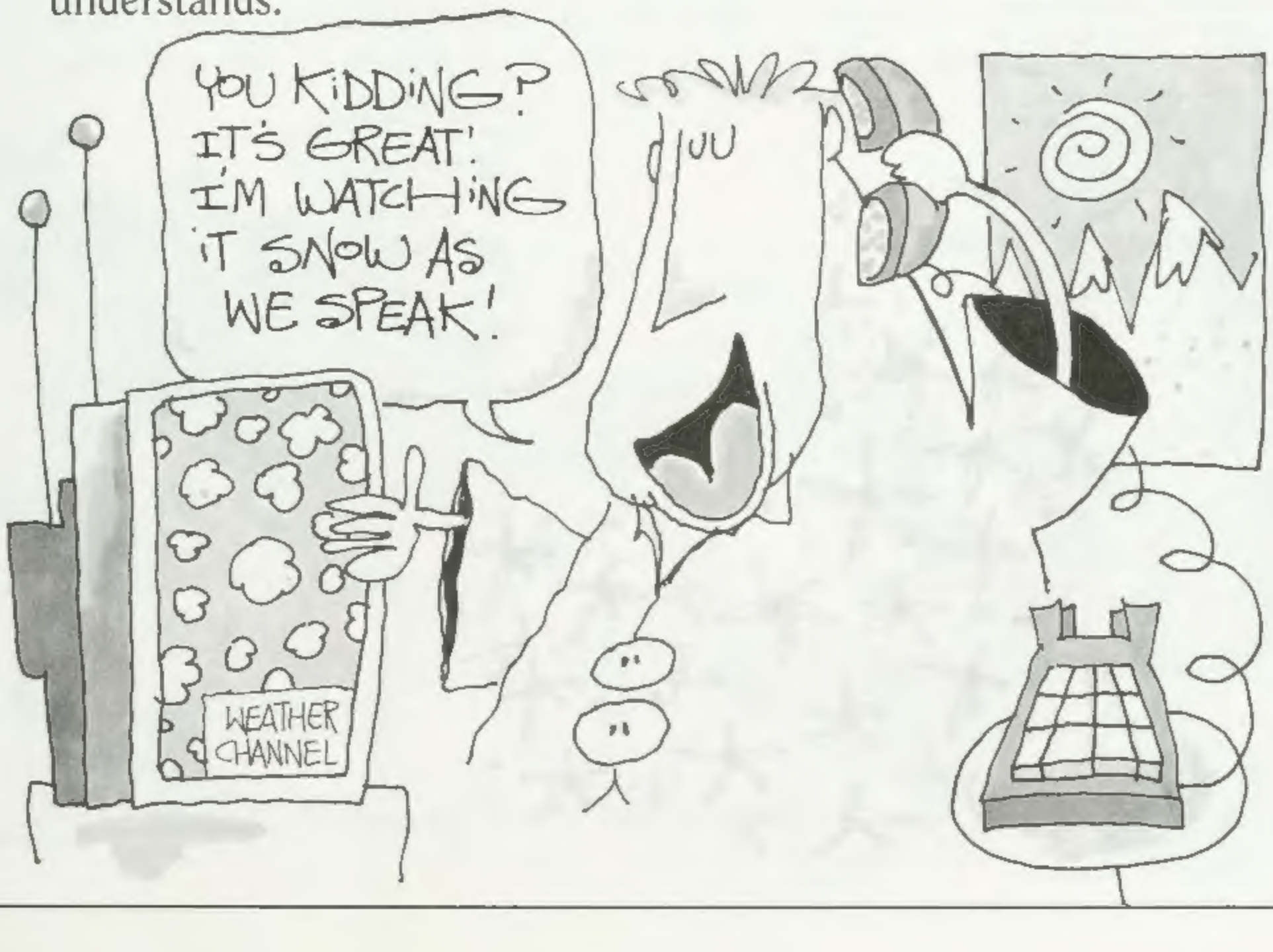
I always thought skiers went skiing for the thrill of sliding down exciting slopes, not the quality of the french fries. But I've been wrong before.

Getting Up Early

Skiing is a get-up-early-on-a-cold-floor-in-the-dark kind of sport. It's not like a beach sport or country club sport where the wind or sun comes up later and you can start your recreation at a civilized hour. In skiing, the good untracked powder is out there waiting early in the morning, when the lifts open, at the very same moment that your body is saying "let's stay under these snugly covers a little longer." Swiss ski chalets have these thick feather quilts which are absolutely impossible to escape from before 10 a.m. and if you're underneath with someone attractive of the opposite sex, you'd better plan on noon.

Ski Reports

Years ago ski areas reported conditions as "Excellent," "Good," "Fair" or "Poor," but the areas quickly learned that they went bankrupt if they reported anything less than "Excellent" because all the other areas were lying and reporting "Excellent." To save themselves the embarrassment of calling bare ground and rocks "Excellent," a code of reporting was devised like 18pp, 2 FG, 46 base, 2 new, 4 sl and P tex cubco, which no one really understands.



Lift Tickets

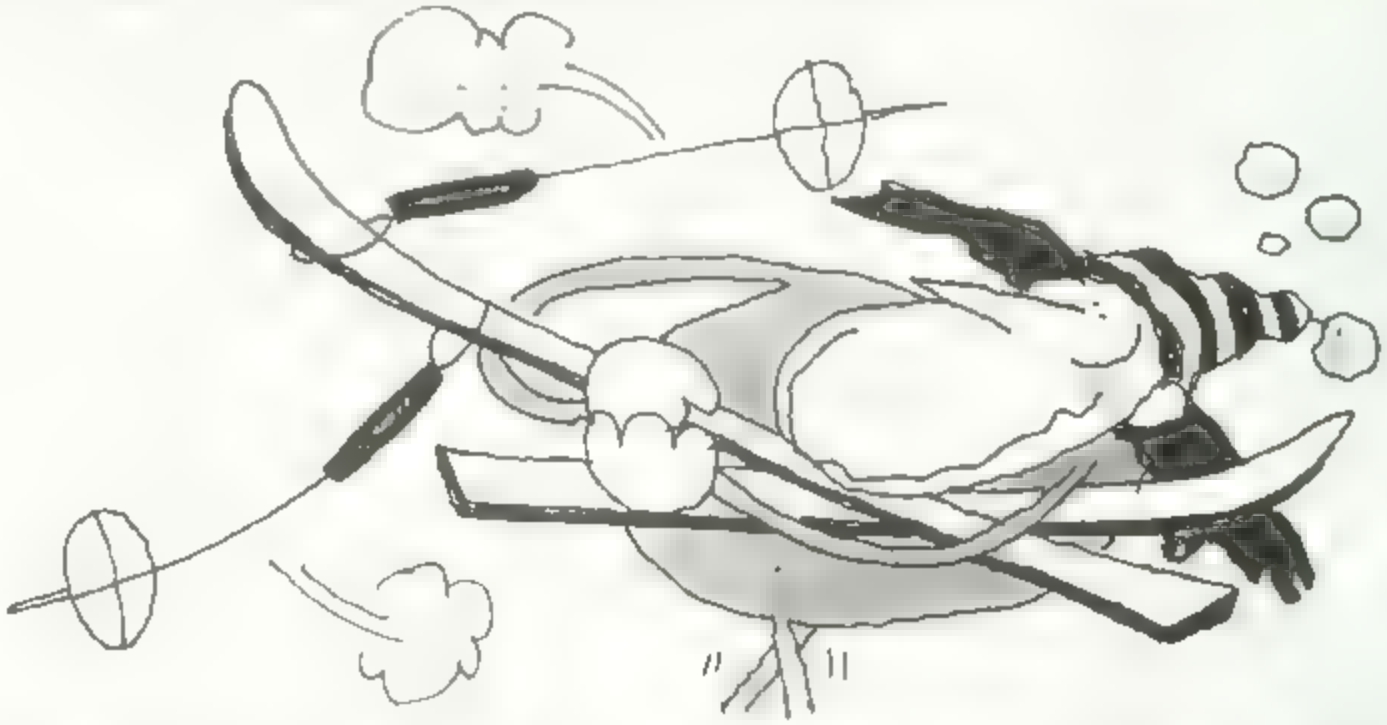
No one talks much about the price of these anymore. They've gotten so expensive it's too embarrassing to calculate, say, what a weekend for a couple costs. Lawyers and investment bankers are the only people who even consider taking their kids along. It's best just to hand over the credit card at the ticket window and sign quickly without looking at the numbers. If anyone calculated what each run cost, the entire industry would collapse.

Dressing for the Cold

The key to keeping warm when you ski is to dress in layers. The disadvantages are that it generates incredible amounts of laundry and makes going to the bathroom devastatingly difficult. When guys are wearing several layers of long johns and one pair gets put on backwards, the poor fellow may fiddle with the fly for hours in a fruitless search, often thinking the poor thing has frozen and fallen off. The exasperation of women trying to peel off layers in a cramped, wet toilet stall while wearing a one piece suit, is a part of skiing men don't want to know about.

How to Carry Your Skis

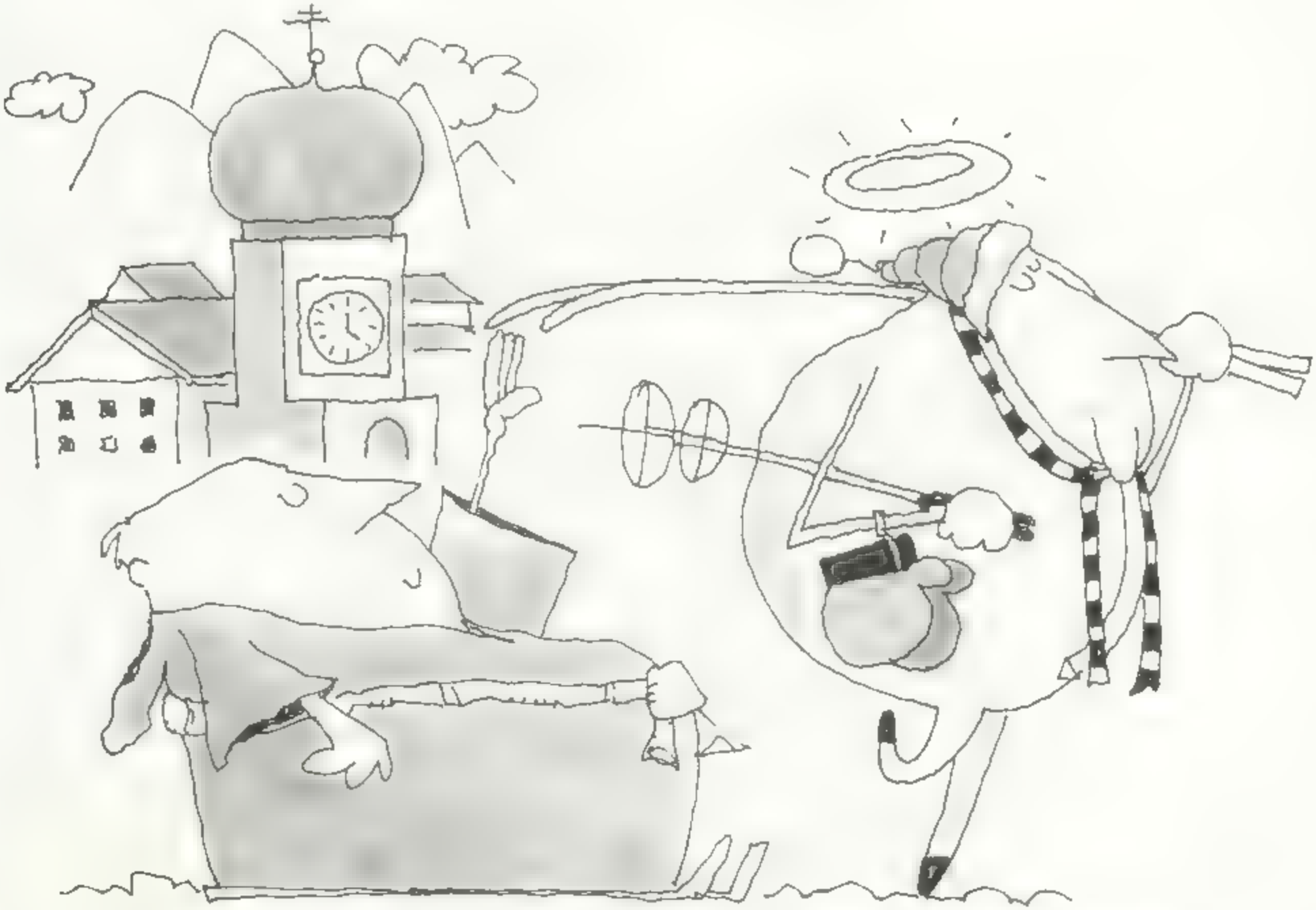
Beginners carry skis like this, which brings all the sharp pointy parts in close contact with their own bodies.



Experts carry skis like this, so when they turn hither and yon, they whack all their friends but manage to keep the dangerous parts far away from themselves.

How to Carry Your Skis

Special instructional classes on how to carry your skis and all other equipment are offered by a group of monks in Austria. It's an extensive 2 week course that teaches you to deftly hoist the skis to a shoulder without pinching your fingers or fraying your parka. You can then make it from your car to the lodge without looking like an overfilled Mexican bus or a dork using those plastic carrying handles.



Chair Lift Etiquette

Chair lift etiquette has grown tremendously in complexity from the days of double chair lifts where you'd greet a stranger with a simple "So, where ya from?" and then you'd play "Do you know?" Nowadays a host of rules and customs govern when you can talk and what you can say. A group of monks in Austria teach an extensive course on chair lift etiquette.

Etiquette on a Quad

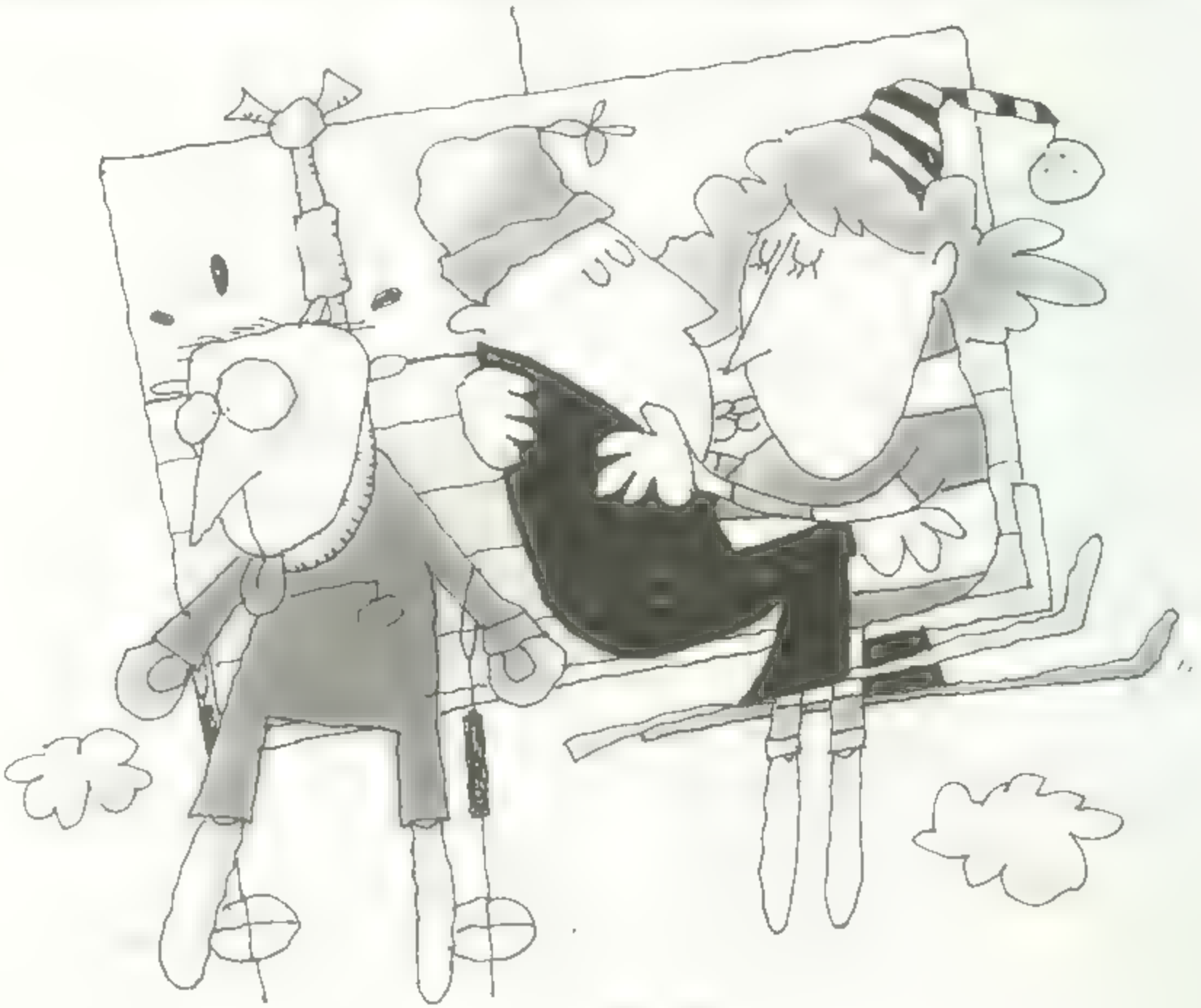
1. A couple joining another couple to ride a quad should only talk to each other.
2. A single joining a group of 3 on a quad may not talk to them.
3. A single on a high speed quad should not even look at the other passengers but should study the trail.

Etiquette on a Triple

1. A single joining a couple on a triple may speak only if spoken to first.

2. Strictly speaking, if the couple starts making out, you're supposed to jump off the lift but no one ever does.

3. Three friends riding a triple in cold weather always put the cutest person in the center seat so snuggling is more fun.

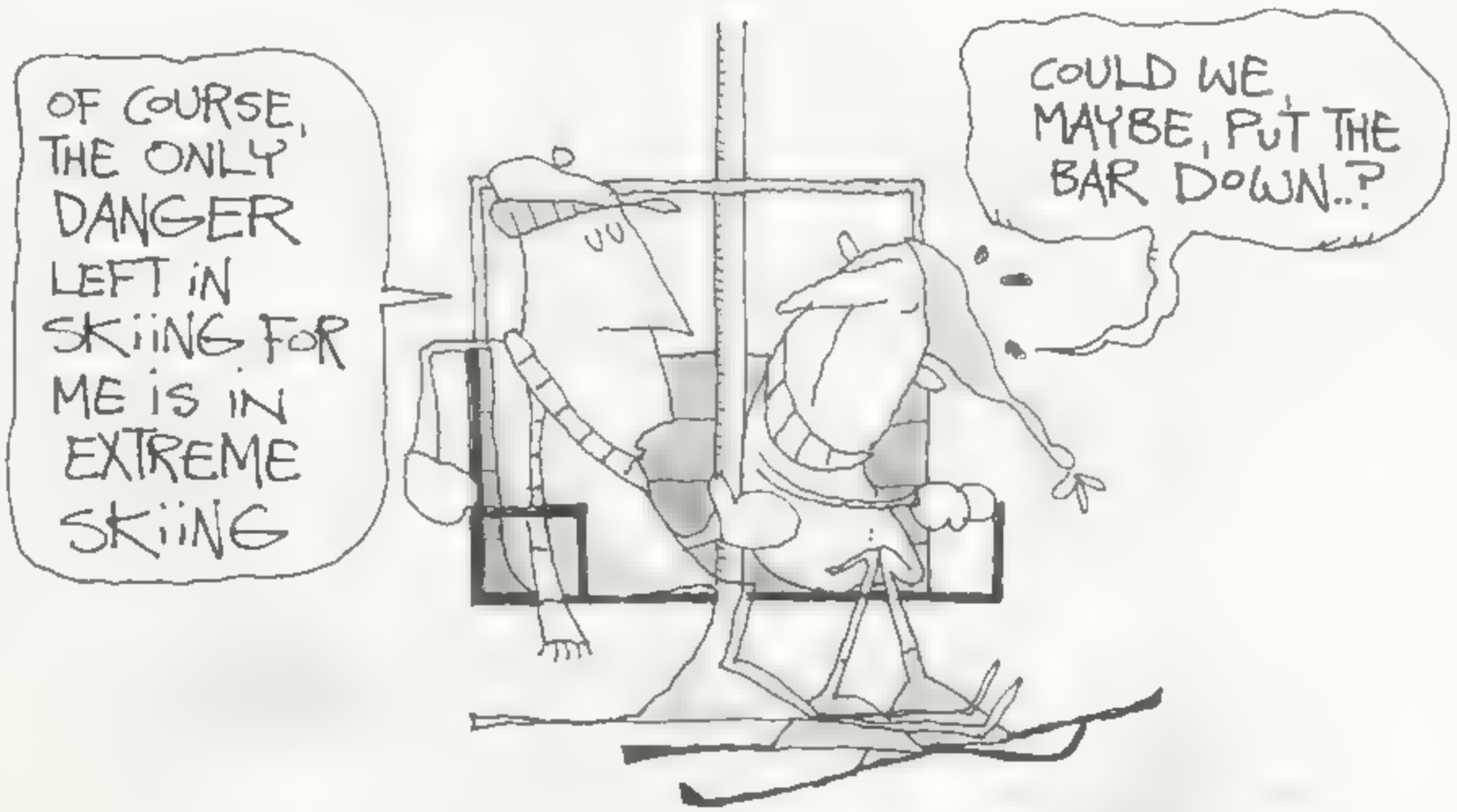


Chair Lift Etiquette

1. If asked about your skis, you must always say that you love them. Also, mention that you tune them every night.

2. It is correct anytime to say, "Oh, you should have been here yesterday or last week," but only after determining that the other person wasn't. If anyone mentions that the skiing's good, you should laugh derisively and explain how much better it was last week.

3. When they ask if you've been down Suicide Dive or whatever double black diamond is the current big draw, it is normal to shrug and say it's really no longer a challenge since they've started grooming it.



Games to Play on the Lift

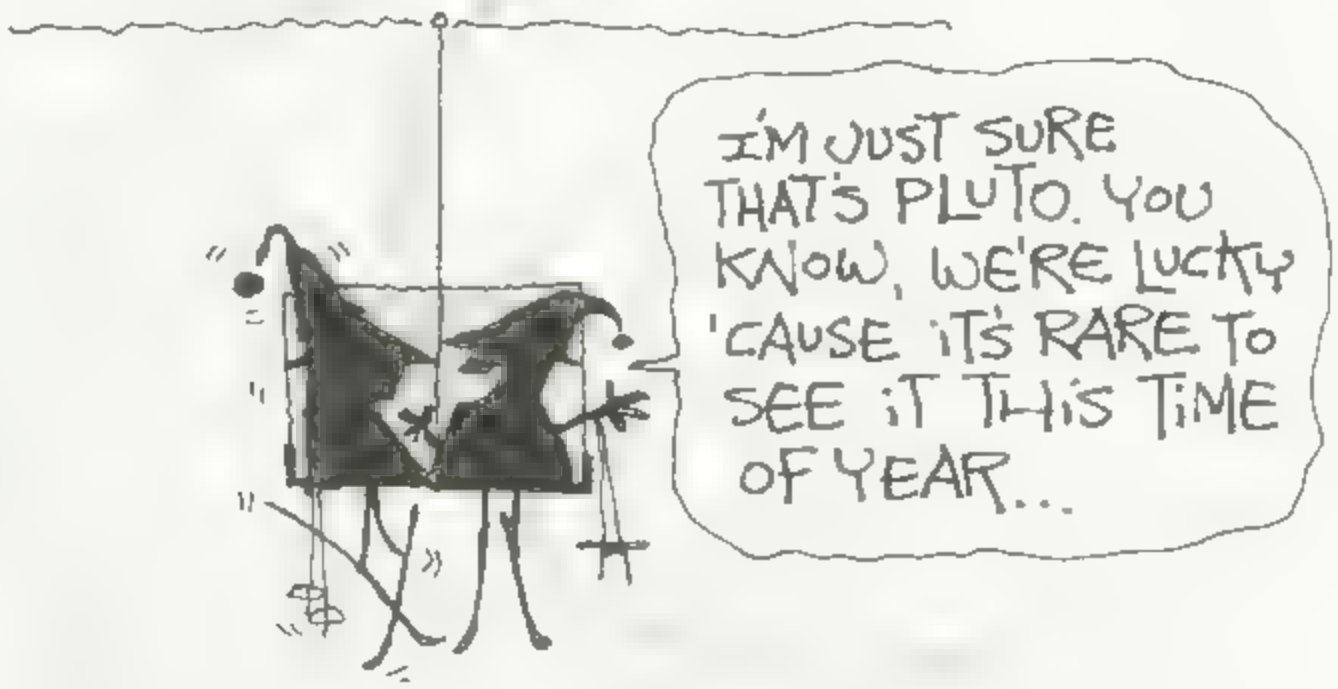
1. **Bouncing and Swinging** is good and if done in the right spot, can set up a harmonic motion all the way up the cable, making lots of other skiers nauseous.

2. **Chicken** is a great game where you see how long you can wait at the top of the lift before someone chickens out and raises the safety bar.

3. **Bang** uses your finger as an imaginary gun to shoot skiers. You have only 6 bullets, and you point and say "Bang" when a skier is about to fall. Wipe out the most skiers to win.

What to do When the Chair Lift Stops

The games you can play on a chair lift only go so far. After the chair has gotten stuck for a few minutes, and chair lifts only get stuck on freezing, windy days, all of the humor goes out of the stuckees. At this point, loud moaning is good or shouting expletives, like the "F" and "S" words. If the chair is stuck all night, you should worry about freezing to death and this thought usually stimulates even better expletives like the MF, SSS, FSS, and x + yz words. Evacuation by rope is the ultimate terror and in the minds of some skiers, like my wife, has led to more catastrophic injuries than those seen in World War II.



Ski Security

When you take off your skis, it's a good idea to lock them to a rack or tree to prevent theft. In big Eastern resorts, it's a pretty good idea to lock them up even while you're still skiing. At Hunter Mountain, it's mandatory. If carrying the cable and lock around with you all day and freezing your fingers to work the combination seems too much of a bother, you can decorate the tops of your skis with stickers so they'll look so bad no thief would bother stealing them.

Ski Security

An alternative to ski locks is to separate your skis, the theory being that few one legged skiers can run fast enough to escape after stealing your ski. Separating your skis means you should allow an extra 10 or 15 minutes to find them again or at least to arrange a close match when you are ready to resume skiing. Most of the people you see wandering around outside a lodge are looking for the skis they separated, and most do find their skis and often a date for the evening by the end of the day.

People who lock up or separate old or beginner type skis are making a mockery of this whole ski security business.

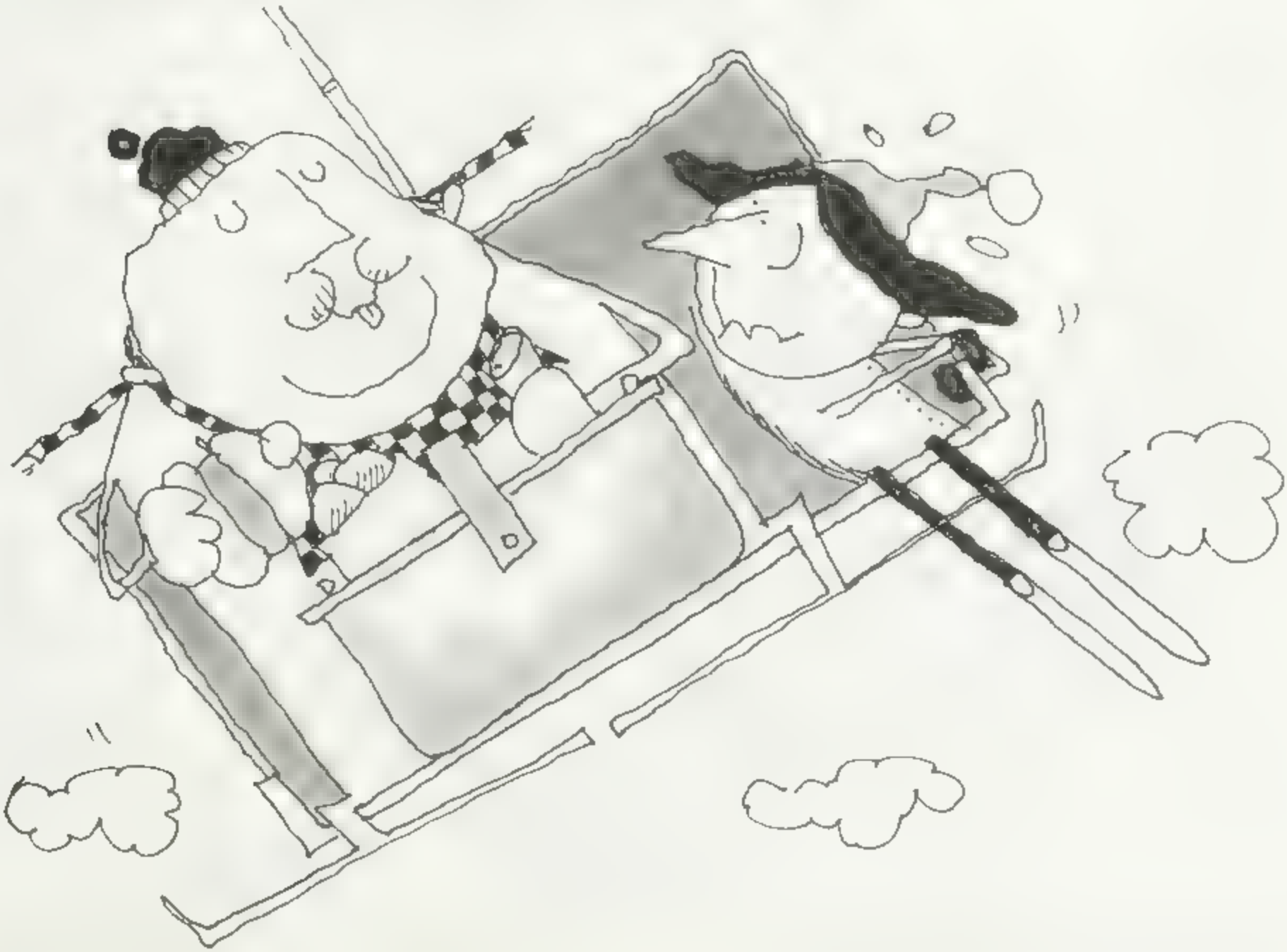
Lunch at the Base Lodge

Lunch revolves, not so much around getting the burgers, but in finding a place to sit. Lodges are crowded at lunch and seats are at a premium. The trick here is to work in a group. Some people in your group get in the food line and others get a table by staring and dripping on people until they leave, and then spread their equipment around, a little on each seat, where the ice on them melts and makes little puddles. Members of the group usually forget enough of their equipment that the table may still be reserved the next day.

Skiing and Calories

Skiing is a terrific way to lose weight. You burn calories constantly just being out in the cold and wearing all that heavy clothing and walking around lugging skis and boots. Even your polypropylene underwear helps by wicking those calories away from your body.

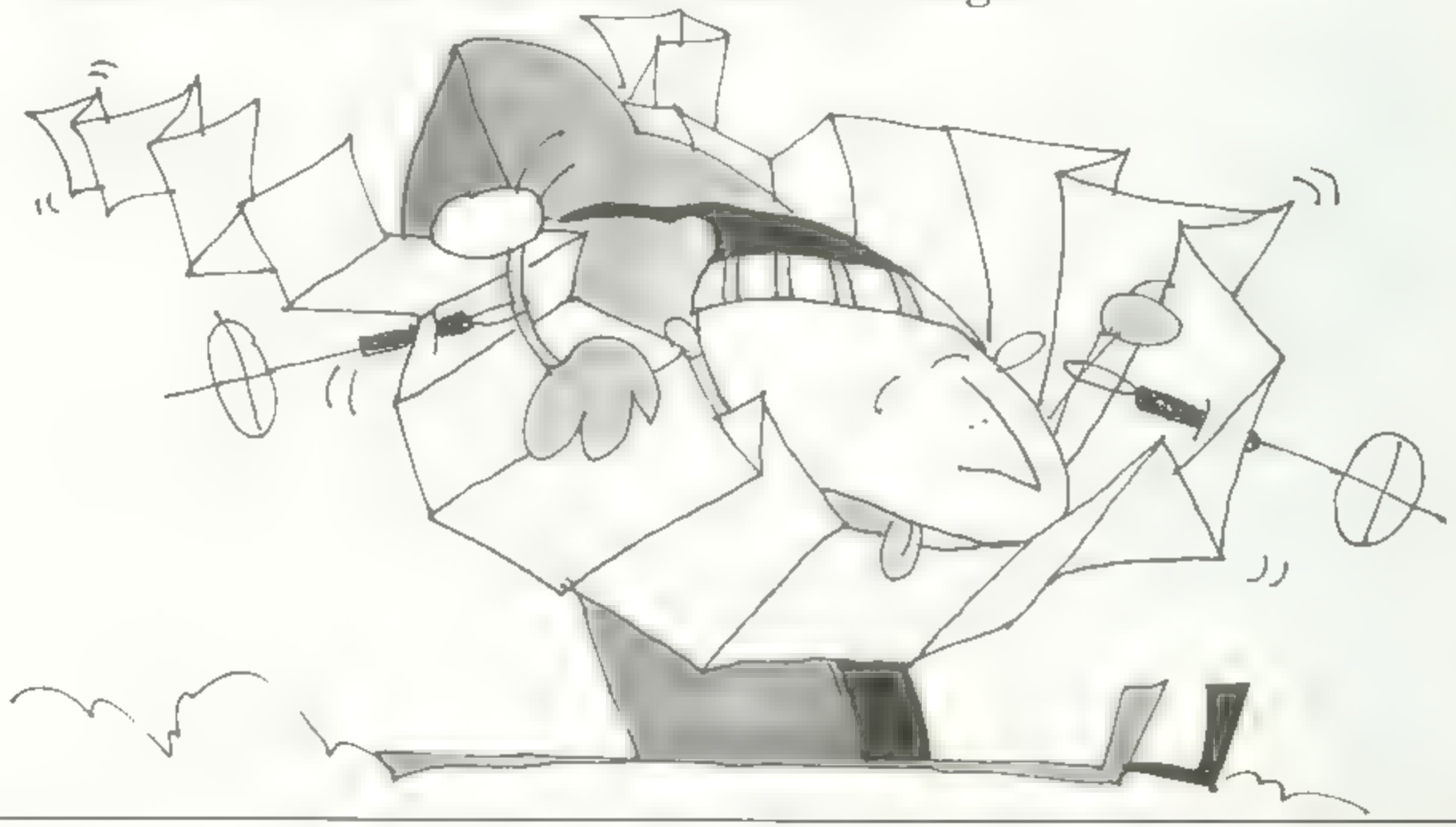
Hot chocolate and pizza consumed at ski lodges is almost totally converted into heat for your fingers and toes.



Trail Maps

It's a good idea to plan your day around an unfamiliar ski area with a trail map. You can pick one up at the ticket window, and the first thing you'll notice is that nothing on the map even vaguely resembles the terrain features of the mountain. Even if you could read the little green and red map squiggles which are supposed to be trails, you'd freeze your fingers off trying to unfold it in a stiff wind on the hill. The only real function of the trail map is to wave down a ski patrol person when you feel close to death.

Some people don't feel they need a trail map and just go off to ski double black diamonds or whatever the mountain can throw at them. Most of them are never heard from again.



Trail Maps

Trail maps fold up funny like all maps only these are harder to deal with since you are wearing gloves and trying to read them on a chair lift while not dropping your goggles or poles. Since the maps are free, most skiers just wad them into a pocket and pick up a new one at the bottom. It's considered bad form to drop the maps on the trails unless the cover is very thin.

Ski Lodges

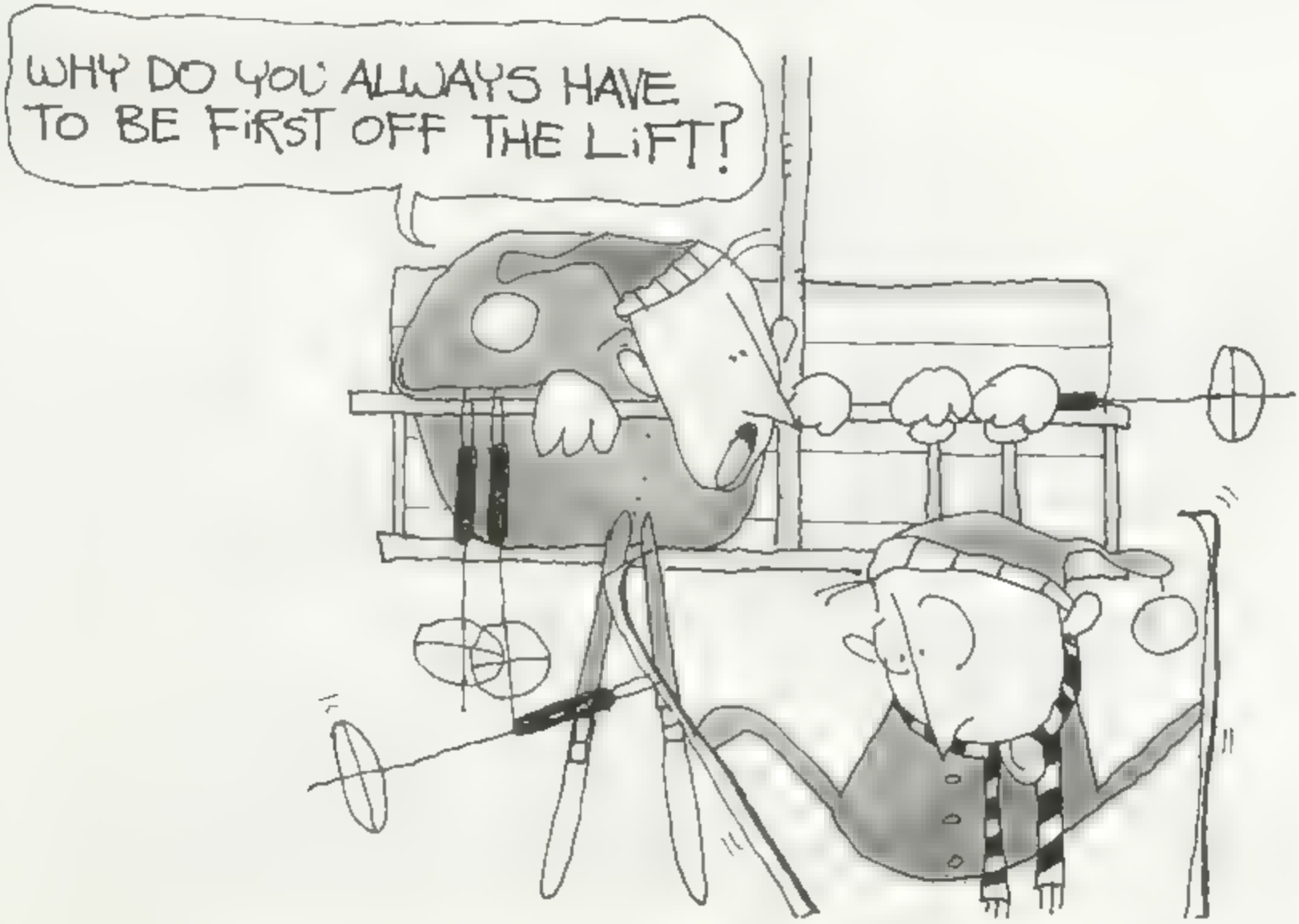
The price of staying at a ski lodge is pretty much a function of how close it is to the mountain. The doors may not close and the toilet needs 3 jiggles to flush but if it's walking distance to the lift, it's going to have a price per night about the cost of your first Volkswagen.

Modestly priced lodges have skinny towels and paper bath mats too, but are about the same distance from the ski area as your home.

Chair Lift Safety

In Vermont, it's against the law to ride up on a chair lift without putting the bar down. Half the police in the state are mobilized into a safety bar patrol during the winter months—"Hey you, hands up! You're under arrest for not putting down your safety bar!"

Out West, they don't even have safety bars. Strange as it seems, the only falling out of chair lift injuries I've heard about took place in the East where drunken skiers slide out from under the bar all the time.



Ski Magazines

These magazines are very thick in the fall. I mean really thick and with inserts and foldouts that makes reading an issue equivalent to Tolstoy's "War and Peace." In winter and spring, they're skinny and they seem to disappear altogether in the summer.

Mostly the magazine contains ads with a scattering of articles on "How to Ski Moguls," "How to Ski Powder," "How to Ski Crud," "How to Ski Steeps"—you get the picture. These are all skills that are totally impossible to learn from reading anything and the advice is always the same.

Ski Magazines

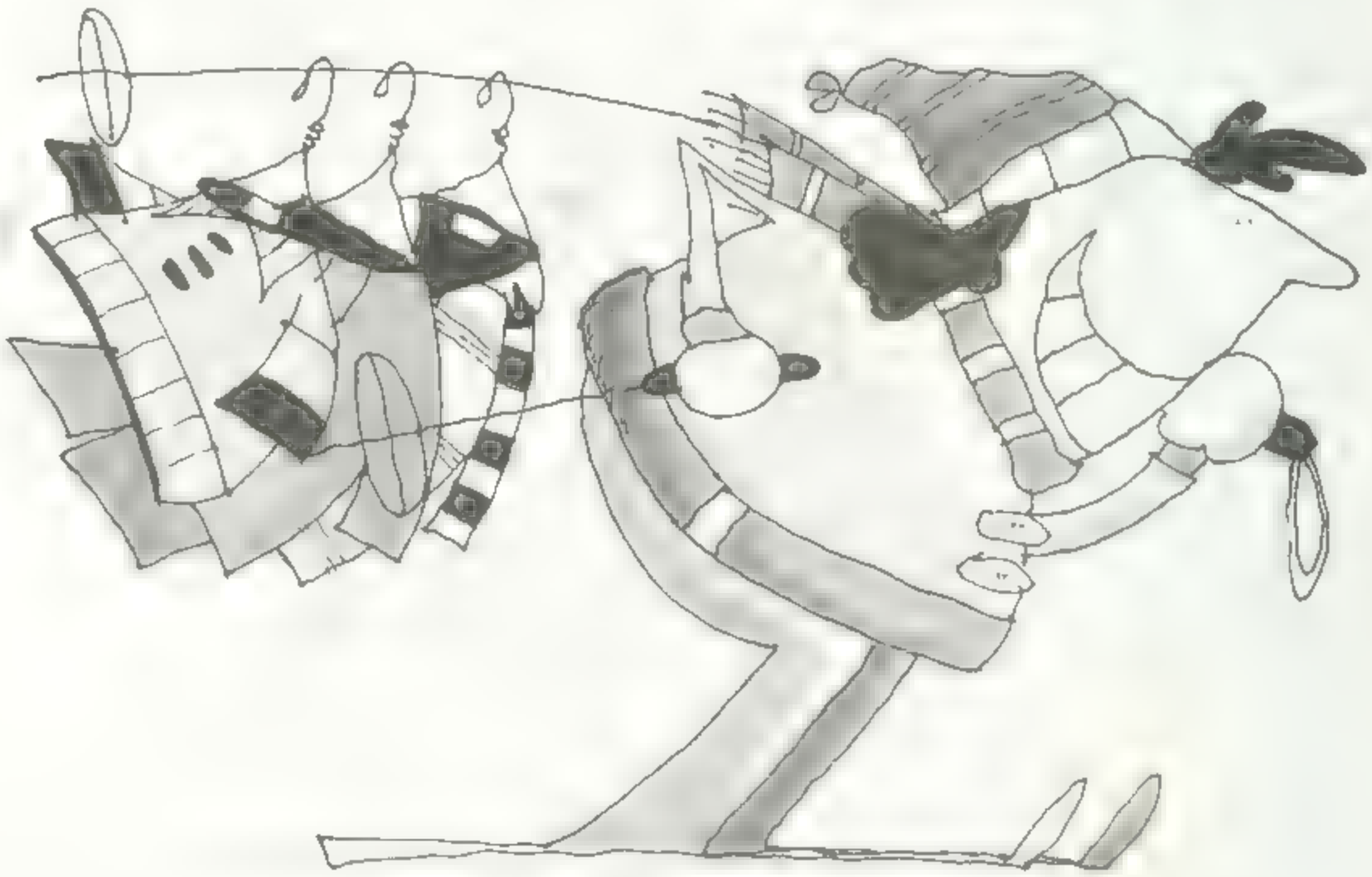
How to ski powder, crud and steeps articles.

1. Roll your knees
2. Rotate your hips
3. Commit your edge
4. Flex something you're not sure of
5. When in doubt, bend your knees

If this sounds complicated, just follow the vector diagrams that always accompany these articles showing arrows representing thrust, force, slope, wind and the way to the toilet, which are easily understood by any graduate engineer.

Ski Magazines Fashion Aid

Every year, ski magazines announce that PRINTS ARE IN. And every year the only ski parkas you see are solids. There must be some reason for this phenomenon, but it escapes me. Maybe they wear prints in St. Moritz or other trendy areas. Ski magazines can cue you in to the IN colors, but these change so quickly that people's outfits have been known to go out of style while they were waiting for their girl friends to blow dry their hair in the morning.



Ski Parka Style

Adding to the expense of rapidly changing "in" colors are the totally coordinated outfits. These are skiers, usually female, who match skis, bindings, boots and poles with their one piece suits. If you step on these people's skis, they will hit you with a $165 pink pole. The best parkas have the most zippers. I have one outfit that must have 120 zippers. You can lose things in all those pockets that you won't find till spring.

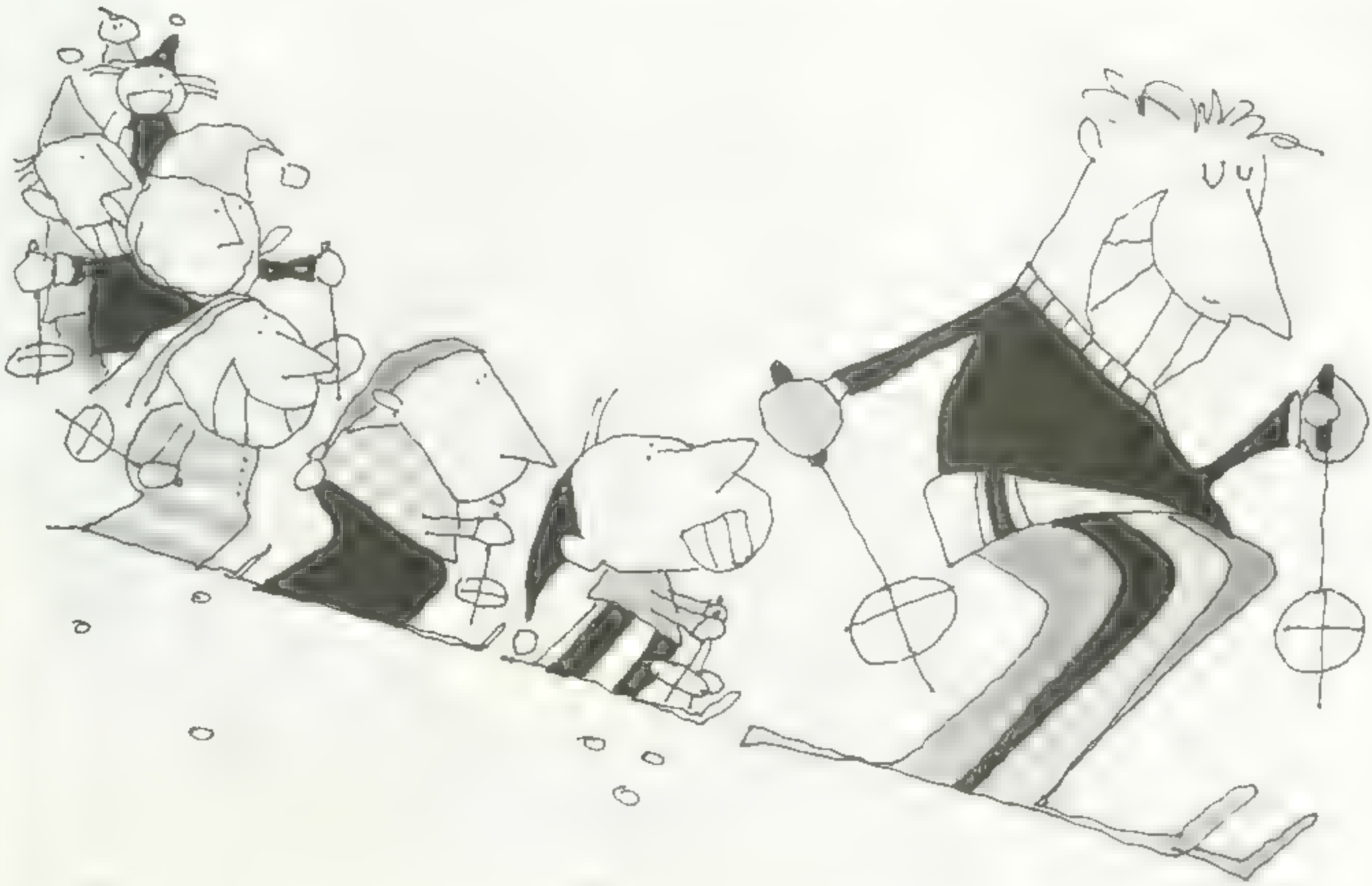
Ski Instructors

Every ski area has a head of the ski school who is called PEPE. There seems to be an endless supply of Pepes coming out of Austria to head ski schools. In the old days, these guys used to make cuckoo clocks or something, but now they are all here. These Pepes walk around all day in a flashy outfit with a big smile and back slap for anyone who has already spent $200,000 on private lessons that year.

Ski Instructors

The other instructors are called Hans or Karl and they try to get a few Franz's or Max's thrown in so when a woman yells "Yo Hans" at a bar, 23 Austrians don't all turn around. They say things like "Don't forget to bend zee downhill pole."

These instructors sometimes teach by having you imitate animals like ducks, elephants or bunnies. Because these animals can't ski, you won't be able to either.



Snow Boards

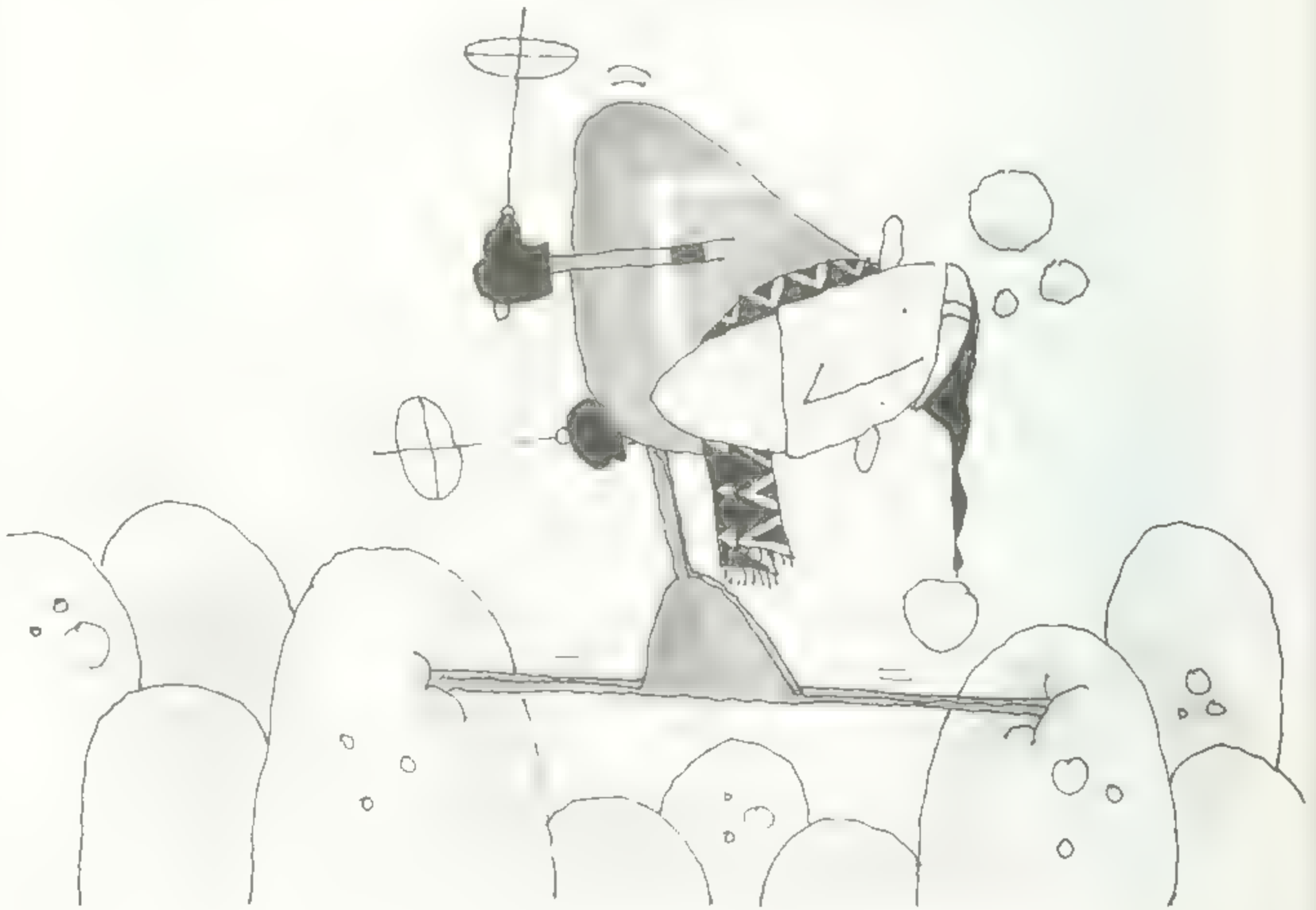
You know how a snow boarder says hello? "Sorry dude." These things have a maximum age limit of 15 and very few of the riders have learned to make them turn. Only 14 kids in the whole world can make them stop. You can really see the potential for disaster on a ski slope with this testosterone-loaded group, and most skiers try to get behind a tree when they hear the unmistakable scraping sound of a board or words like "Gnarly" and "Rad" echoing around the mountain.

Goggle Lenses

Have you ever tried to replace the lenses to your goggles? You know, you get a scratch or two but the frame is still new so you try to buy a lens. Ski shop dudes die from laughter over this one. The goggle manufacturers change their models every 6 weeks and in the entire history of skiing, only 4 people have ever found replacement lenses that fit. Once I figured I'd beat the system by buying an extra lens at the time I bought the goggles. The frame broke.

Where Moguls Really Come From

For years, no one knew where moguls came from. Now people realize that at fine ski areas the operators use carefully selected mogul rocks planted in patterns under the snow. The best rocks come from Sapporo, Japan, and bigger areas stock a selection of sizes to maximize revenue for local chiropractors.



Windchill

Windchill is a number that tells you how cold it is when you are skiing naked. It's the effect of cold plus wind on your bare skin and it was developed at the Army Natick Labs in the early 60's where, at the time, I happened to be commanding a small group of criminals. They used to have these chambers where unfortunate volunteers would march on treadmills or sit around in their underwear telling white-coated scientists how miserable they were. As it turns out, windchill factors are mostly used nowadays to impress friends, who don't ski, with just how incredible the conditions were that you were brave enough to venture into.

How to Ski Ice

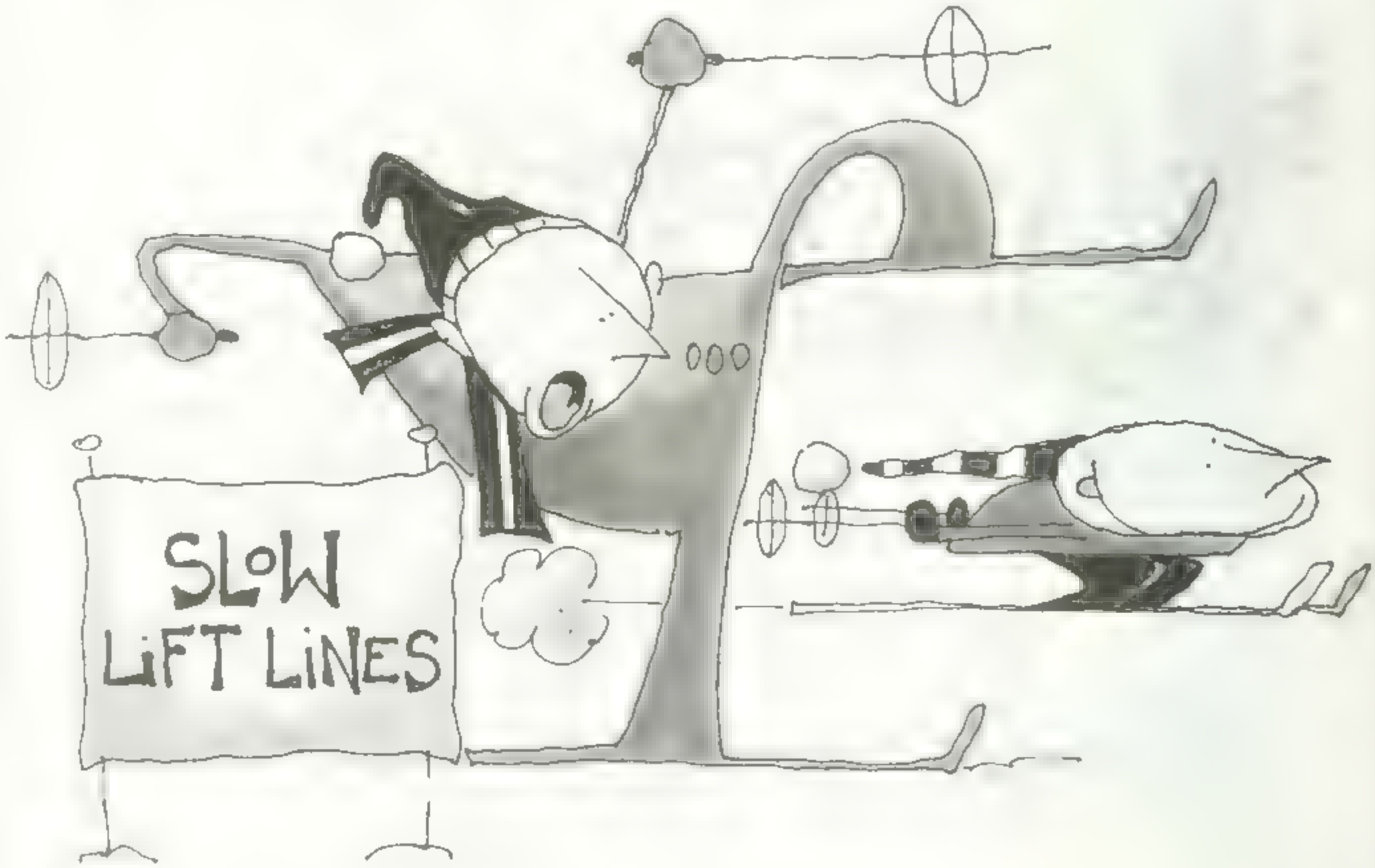
When encountering ice, you should yell in a loud voice "AAAAICE," in a whining New York accent if possible. This will inform all those on the chair lift passing overhead or skiing near you that you are no longer responsible for any falls or out-of-control maneuvers. Remember that "AAAAICE."

Hand Warmers

They have these little packets that work by magic. You rip them open, jiggle them a little, stick them in your glove or mitten, mutter a little invocation like "damn it's cold" and they give off heat and keep your hands warm all day. This is the greatest ski invention since zipper pulls.

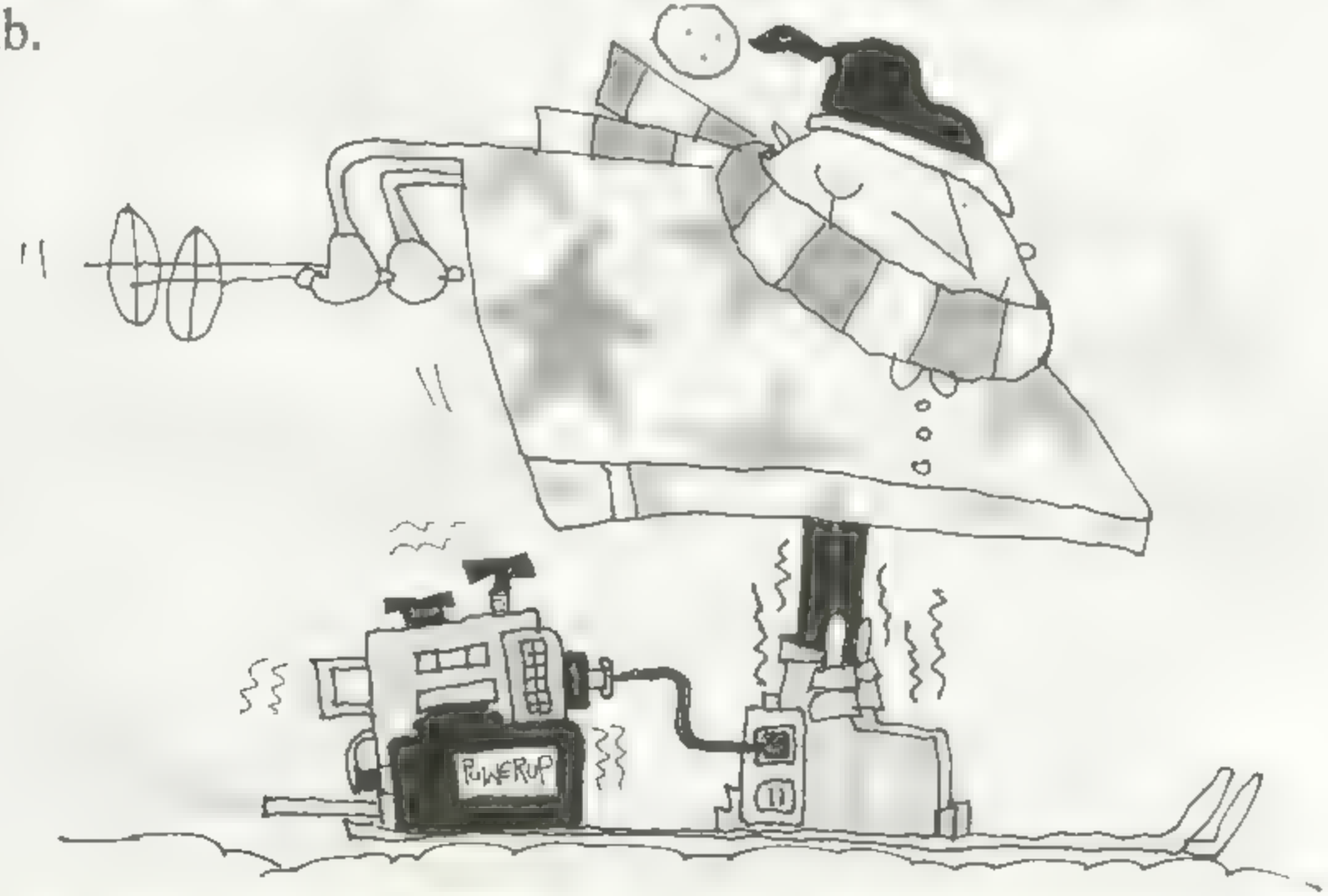
Skiers' Courtesy Code

This code suggests that skiers should do things like look uphill before moving out on a trail, and pick up people they hit or at least say they're sorry. Or if they forget, ski like hell away so the ski patrol can't take their ticket. This code is printed on napkins and posted on a zillion signs all over the ski area, but as far as I can tell, no one has ever read a word of it.



Ski Socks

"If your feet are cold, don't put on an extra pair of socks." This expert advice, which is contrary to all rules of common sense, rests on the assumption that the extra pair of socks will squeeze your foot in the already tight fitting boot, cut off the circulation and only make your feet colder. This theory ignores the fact that bunched up sock, heel straps, underwear and mysterious projections in your boots have already cut off any possible blood flow to your feet and the only thing saving your toes from amputation are the $120 boot heaters you were smart enough to remember to recharge last night. Most skiers I know only ski until their batteries wear down and then stick their feet in a hot tub.

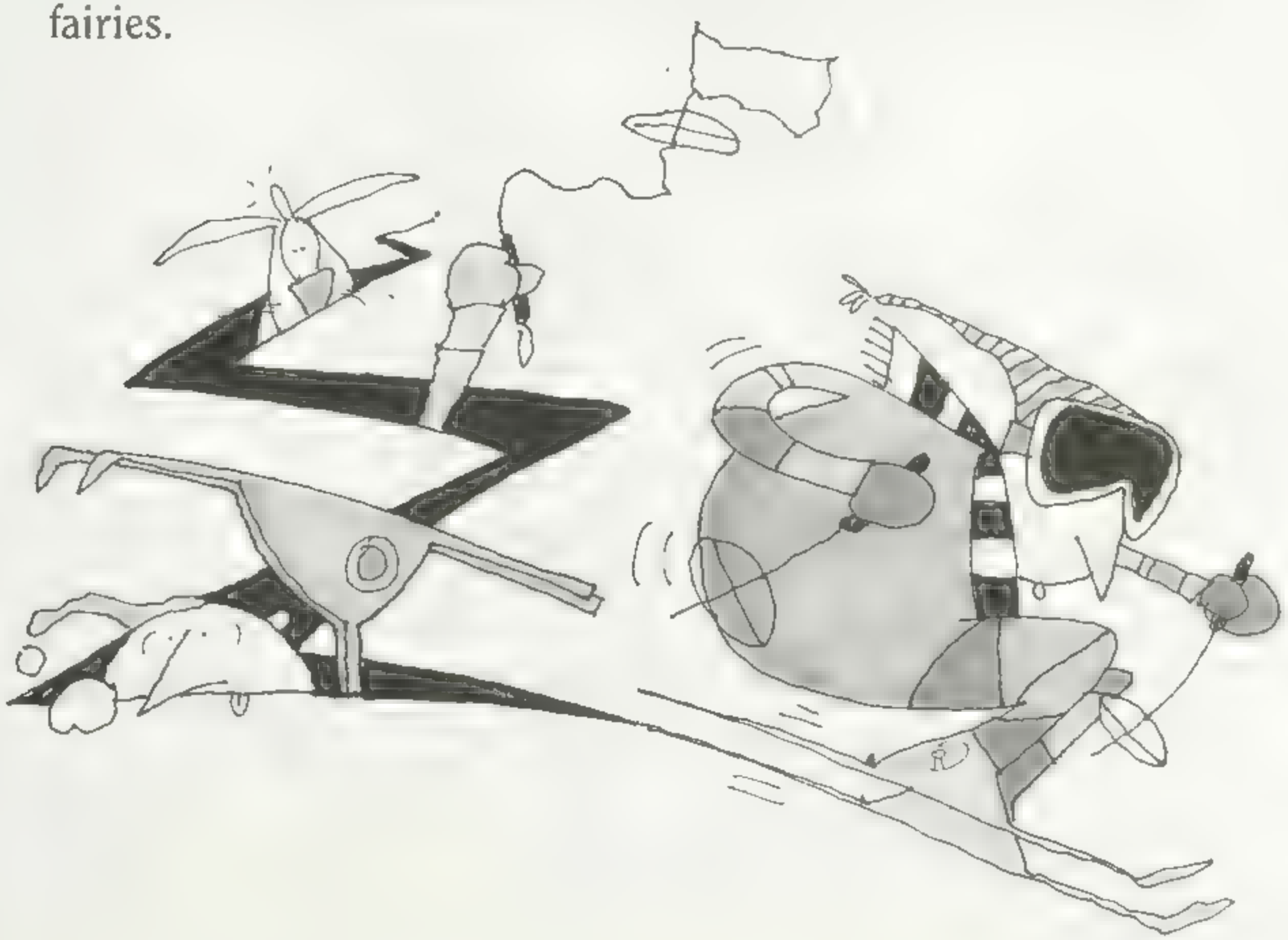


Liability Insurance

Liability insurance, which really means "lawyers' fees" accounts for 72% of the cost of lift tickets these days. It also accounts for foam mats on lift towers and terrifying signs like "**Skiing out of control can cause death or catastrophic injury or worse.**" What kind of sign is that to greet you with at something that is supposed to be recreational? Ski areas have even taken to posting the number of deaths at their ticket windows. "Wow, we're up to 7 already and it's only February."

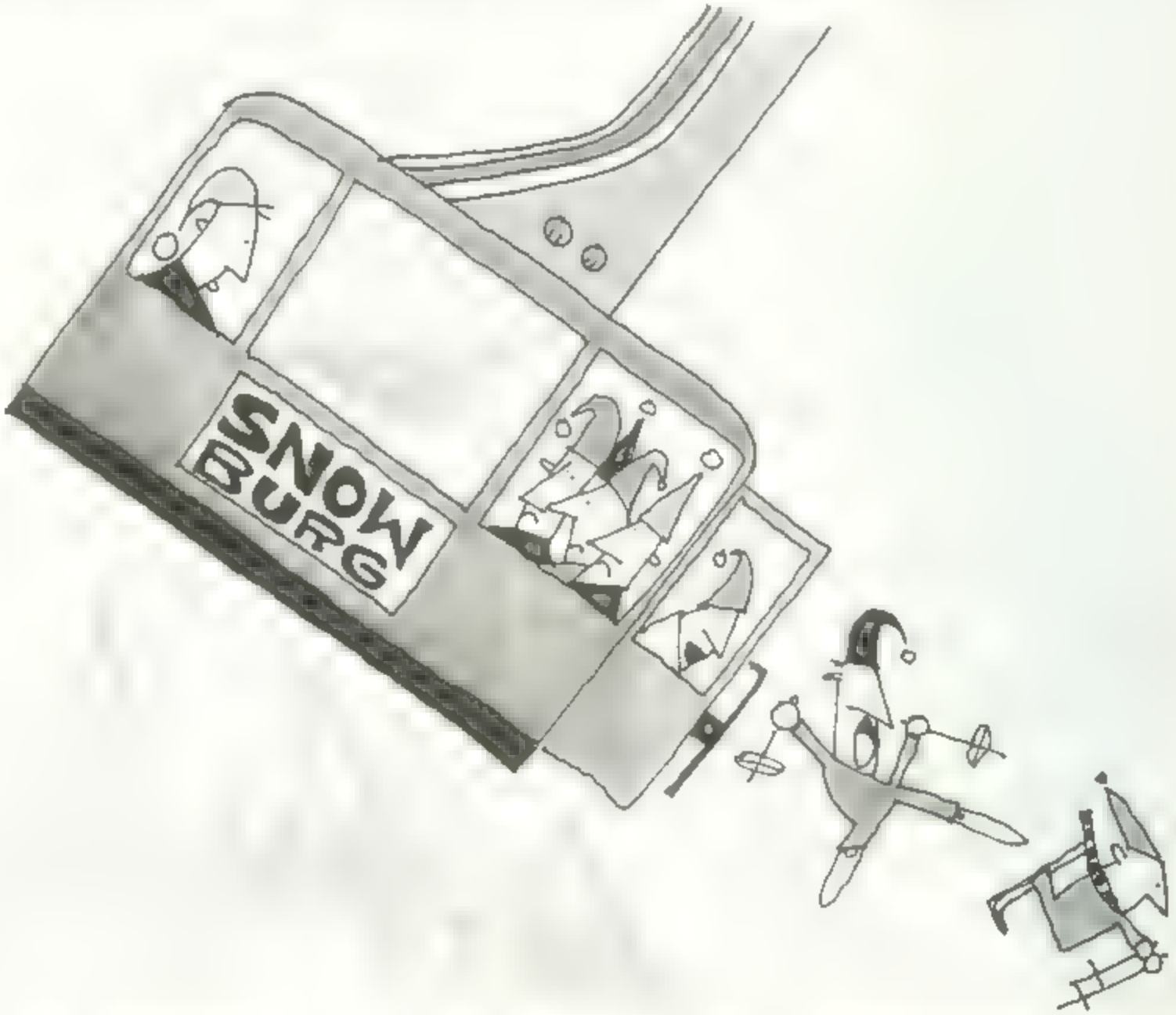
Ski Myths

Everyone talks lots about carving turns. Ski companies advertise skis that carve, boots that carve and instructors teach carving yet you hardly ever see actual skiers carving on a trail. Carving takes work to do and it makes you go down hills very fast and these are basically inconsistent with what skiers want from this sport. Other myths are that Thinsulate keeps you warm, Gortex keeps you dry, hot chilies warm your legs and there really are tooth fairies.



Farting in Cable Cars

This is the most under-reported of all hazards involved in skiing. You have maybe 150 people crammed into a tiny enclosed space having drunk lots of beer the night before and packed away knockwurst and sauerkraut and hamburgers for lunch and bounced themselves up and down on the slopes all day. The heavy clothes and tightly packed bodies may hide the farter but it's statistically impossible to leave a cable car without your eyes watering and your lungs bursting from trying to hold your breath.



Rules for Hot Tubs and Saunas

1. Hot tubs and saunas are inherently much more fun than skiing.

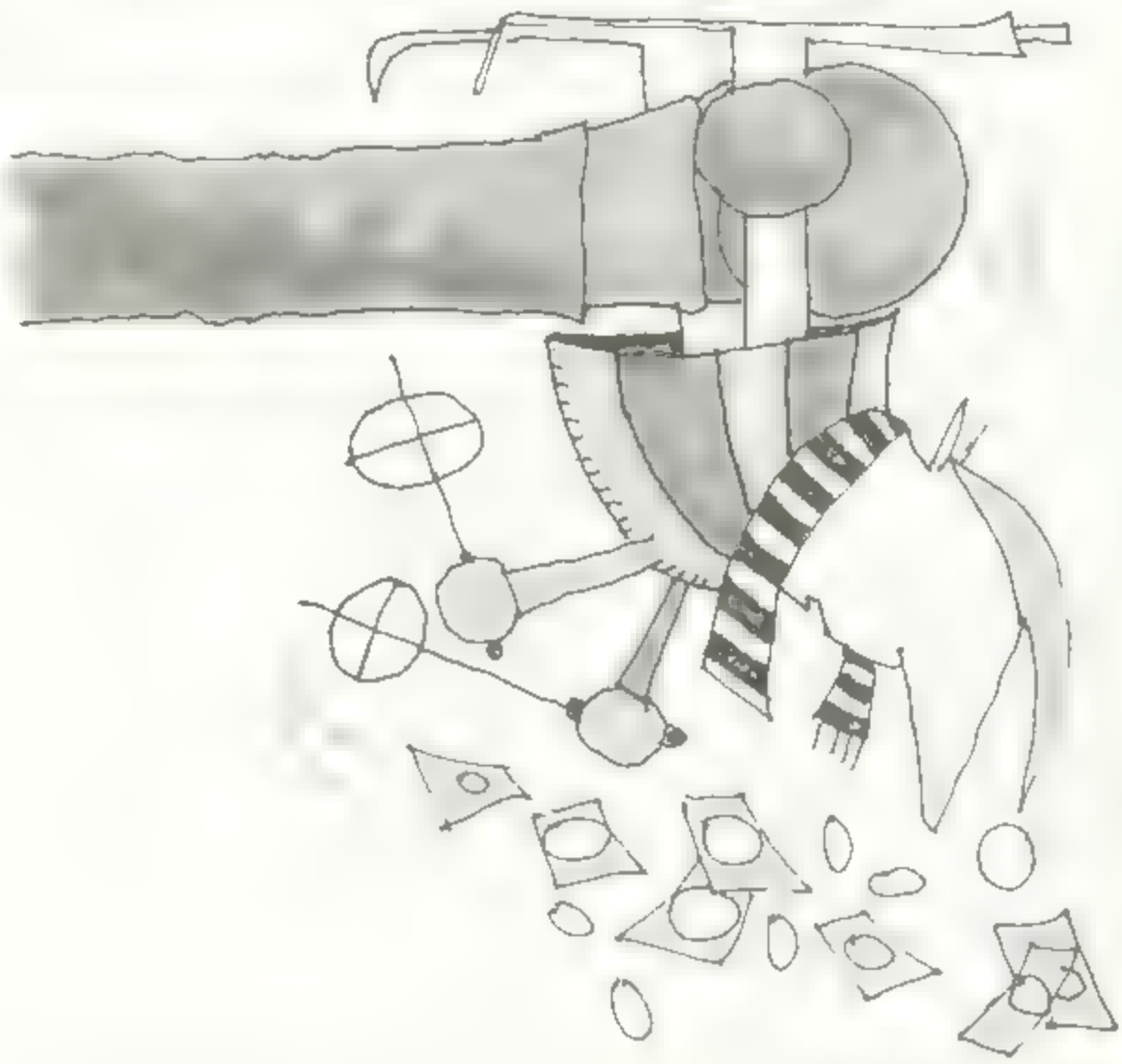
2. Sitting in the sauna is much more fun than rolling around naked in the snow.

3. Times for rolling around naked in the snow:

By yourself	7 seconds
With Wife	19 seconds
With someone else's wife	9 minutes 46 seconds

Skiing and Money

Skiing is inextricably tied up with money. This is not your run-of-the-mill cheapy sport for cheap pseudo-athletes where you buy a pair of sneakers and a ball and go off to have fun. Oh no. Some bindings cost more than tibia fractures. They don't just release, they eject you and can even make your skis soft or stiff, if you can believe it. A super duper Spyder parka I bought this year, and this is the truth, was the last one available in the whole state and has ceramic chips or something to capture the heat of the sun and the moon and long haired blondes. It cost more than my 1958 Austin Healey.



Skiing and Money

I've gone into ski shops to pick up something simple like ski wax and dropped $200 and I didn't even know what I bought. People going skiing with their kids often have to sell their car in the parking lot just to pay for the lift tickets.

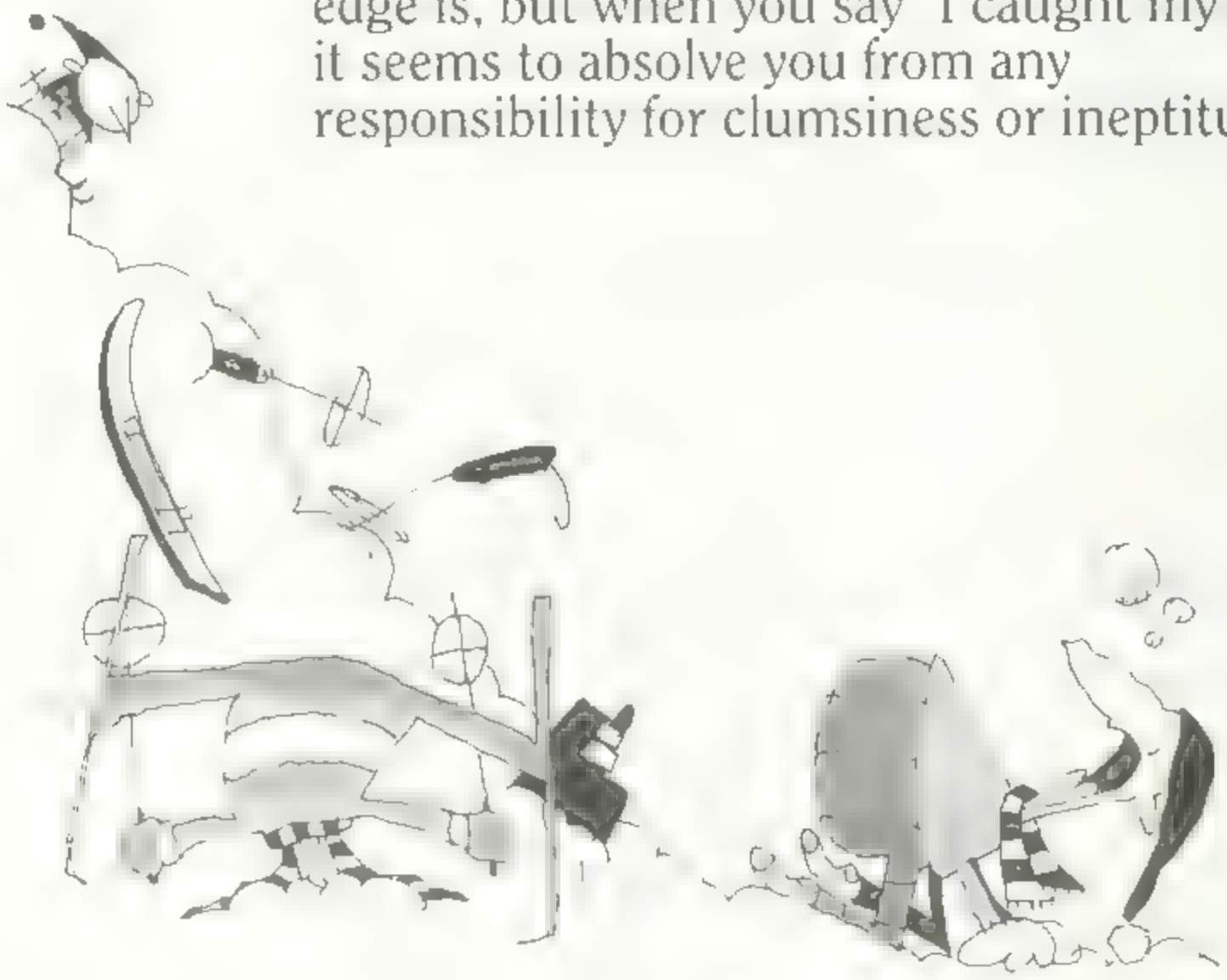
Going to a ski area is very much akin to being mugged by an imitation, quaint, alpine village.

A Faller's Glossary

Face Plant: The agricultural connotation here only applies if your face is planted 6" under what is hopefully not blue ice.

Yard Sale: When you spread your gear all over the mountain and lie there praying some kind soul skiing above you will pick up your skis, poles and goggles and bring them the half mile down to you.

Catching an Edge: I've never really figured out what catching an edge is, but when you say "I caught my edge," it seems to absolve you from any responsibility for clumsiness or ineptitude.



A Faller's Glossary

Meat Wagon: This is the cart the ski patrol carries your body down in, when it's smashed into little bits. Sometimes they need 2 or 3 wagons to carry all the pieces down the hill. Some people on black diamond tracks beg the ski patrol to take them down in the wagons because they're scared to death. Once the patrol starts to offer this service, however, it quickly expands to the size of Kansas to handle them all.

Snow Snakes: Ha ha—you caught your ski on a snow snake. This is a real dumb joke that has survived for years as a cause for mysterious falls. I know it's ridiculous 'cause when I fall, a giant hand reaches out of the sky and smashes me to the ground.

Waiting in Line

This is something you do lots of when skiing. There's a line to park your car, a line for tickets, a line for the toilets, a line for the lifts and often a line for going down the hill. This last one is informal. You really don't have to wait unless you'd like enough room to ski on the snow, rather than on the tops of other people's skis or on fallen turkeys who are jamming up the slope.

Telemarking

Telemarkers are drawn from the ranks of really good skiers, often former racers, who have grown bored with the ease of regular skiing so they decide to go down hill on cross country skis with no heel hold-downs. This is inherently impractical so the equipment has evolved into more seriously edged skis, sturdier boots and even bindings that essentially hold your heel when you weight them. This equipment is rapidly becoming indistinguishable from downhill stuff. It's *de rigueur*, especially for male telemarkers, to have a beard and wear old maroon parkas.

Ski Boots

There are two kinds of boots. Stiff, serious boots that give you great support and transfer your slightest thought into ice-cracking pressure on the skis' edge; and soft, comfy boots that are a pleasure to wear but not quite as performance-oriented. The stiff boots can be worn for about two runs before gangrene starts to set in. Ski a whole morning in these feet-killers without a rest stop in the lodge and you'll start to lose toes. Ski shops have convinced everyone to wear these stiff boots 'cause it stimulates sales of pads, footbeds and other aids to stop the pain. You always see the ones with the stiff boots fiddling with their buckles at the top and bottom of every run.

Lift Operators

Their real title should be "chair lift slower downers so it doesn't crack you in the back of your knee." Out West they do this, plus give you a smile and maybe a tissue. In the East, they talk to their buddies at the top on a phone. This is the biggest cause of chair lift disasters involving your calves and hamstrings, and by the time you get to the bottom to yell at the culprit, they've gone on break.

Glossary of Snow

You know the story of the Eskimos having 23 words for snow. Whether or not it's true, skiers have easily that many, some of which can even be printed in a family-oriented book. Here are a few:

P.P.: This does not refer to a cause of yellow snow but is an abbreviation for packed powder which is a euphemism for frozen granular. If it was at all soft, it would be called powder.

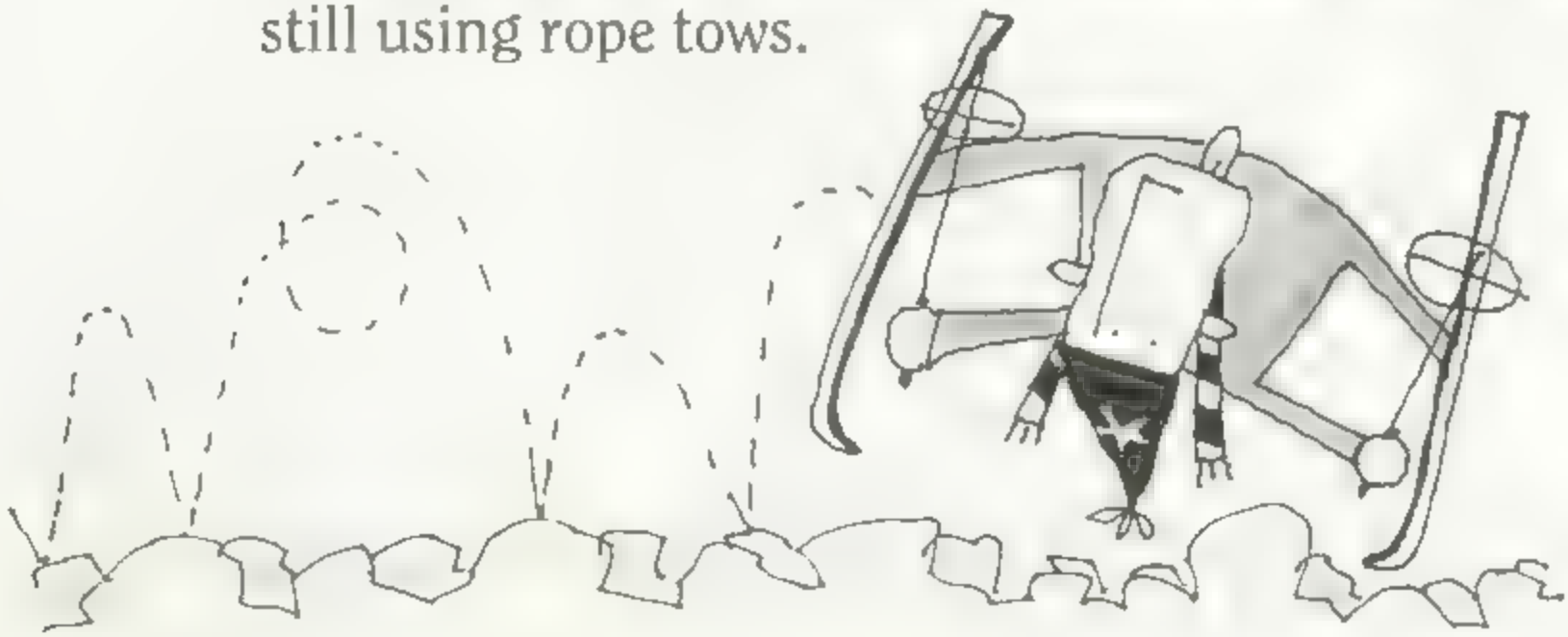
Powder: Out West, this is 17 inches of light, fluffy stuff. In Eastern ski areas, it's any snow you look into that doesn't reflect your face.

Glossary of Snow

Frozen Granular: This kind of snow might best be described as slippery concrete. It's snow that's been packed down by grooming machines, melted a little and frozen solid and then skied on by 3 million people. You'll be happier watching the dog sled races on days that are frozen granular.

Corn Snow: This is a spring skiing condition where the snow has frozen and thawed. It makes for great skiing for about 35 minutes around noon time, after the frozen stuff has had a chance to thaw and before it turns to heavy slush.

Ice: This is a condition never reported by ski areas. Any ski area that reported ice conditions would be immediately closed by the ski area council, and the owners would be sentenced to long terms as rest room attendants. The few remaining state run ski areas are not concerned with making money and they have been known to report ice, but no one skis at these areas since they are still using rope tows.



Glossary of Snow

Champagne Powder: This lightest of all powders on top of bottomless regular powder produces the most glorious skiing of all. It tickles your nose and billows over your head leaving you exhilarated and joyous—just like frozen Margaritas or good sex. The most recent episode of champagne powder was recorded in Utah in 1971.

Mashed Potatoes: Warm weather and rain turn the snow to slush which takes on the consistency of mashed potatoes, and makes you real glad they invented modern release bindings. This is leg-breaking stuff but you get so tired skiing it and so wet after one fall, that no one stays in it for very long.

Wet Spring Conditions: A ski area's terms for mashed potatoes.

Death Cookies: You don't want to know...

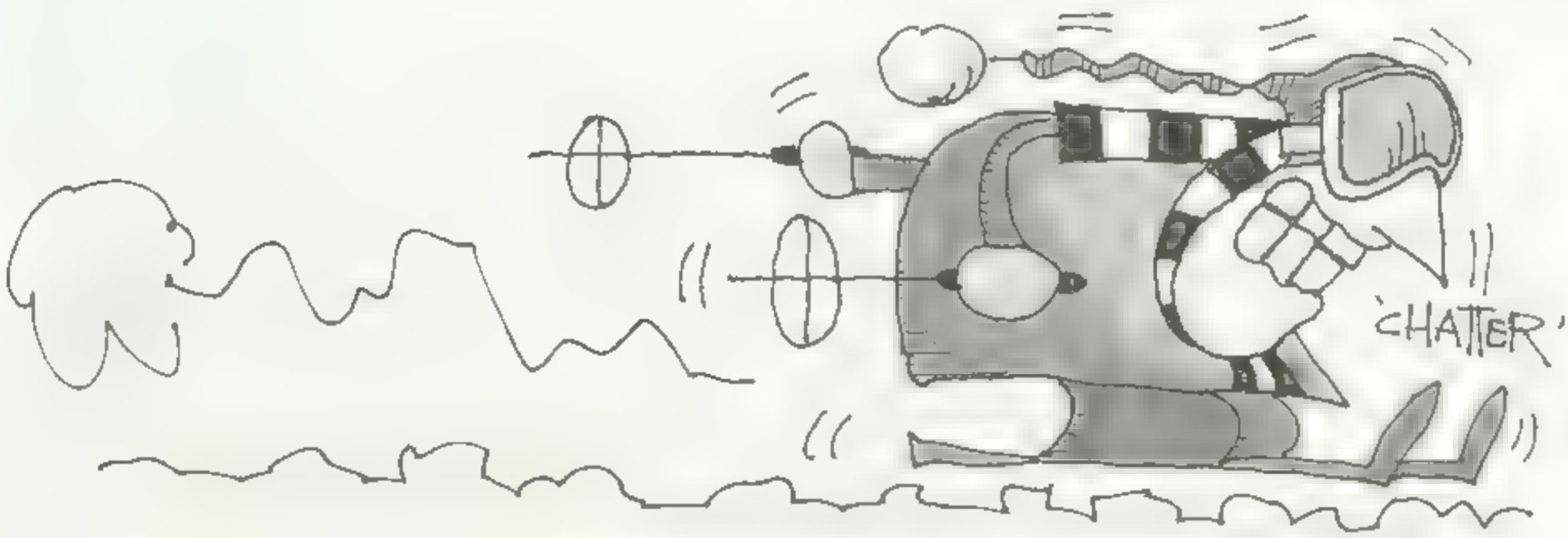
The Man-Made Snow

Grooming machines produce the widest range of new and unusual snows. These bear no relation to the weather conditions but are determined by the grooming machine operator who is a 23-year-old with 4 1/2 hours of training on his machine and loud rock music playing on his walkman.

Roller Ripples: The neat little grooves the rollers make which cause your skis to sound like a rainstorm on top of a tin roof.

Dog Doodies: Little chunks of frozen stuff that you can ski through but you soon wonder why you bothered (No, they're not chocolate treats left by the ski fairies).

Elephant Doodies: Pretty big chunks of frozen stuff that you don't want to ski through, and you definitely don't want to hit.



Cross Country Skiing

If you live in the Northern part of the country, you either take Southern vacations, complain a lot, or take up some form of skiing during the long winter months. Cross country skiing is perfect for people who don't want the expense and danger of downhill skiing and also who don't want to have any fun. 'Cause, you see, cross country skiing is like work. First, there is the waxing thing which would take several books to explain, and then there's the walking up hills with these clunky skis on your feet, and sliding down in terror with only your toes fastened. I haven't even mentioned Kliester waxes, which once they get on your hands will stick there until Spring.

Cross Country Skiing

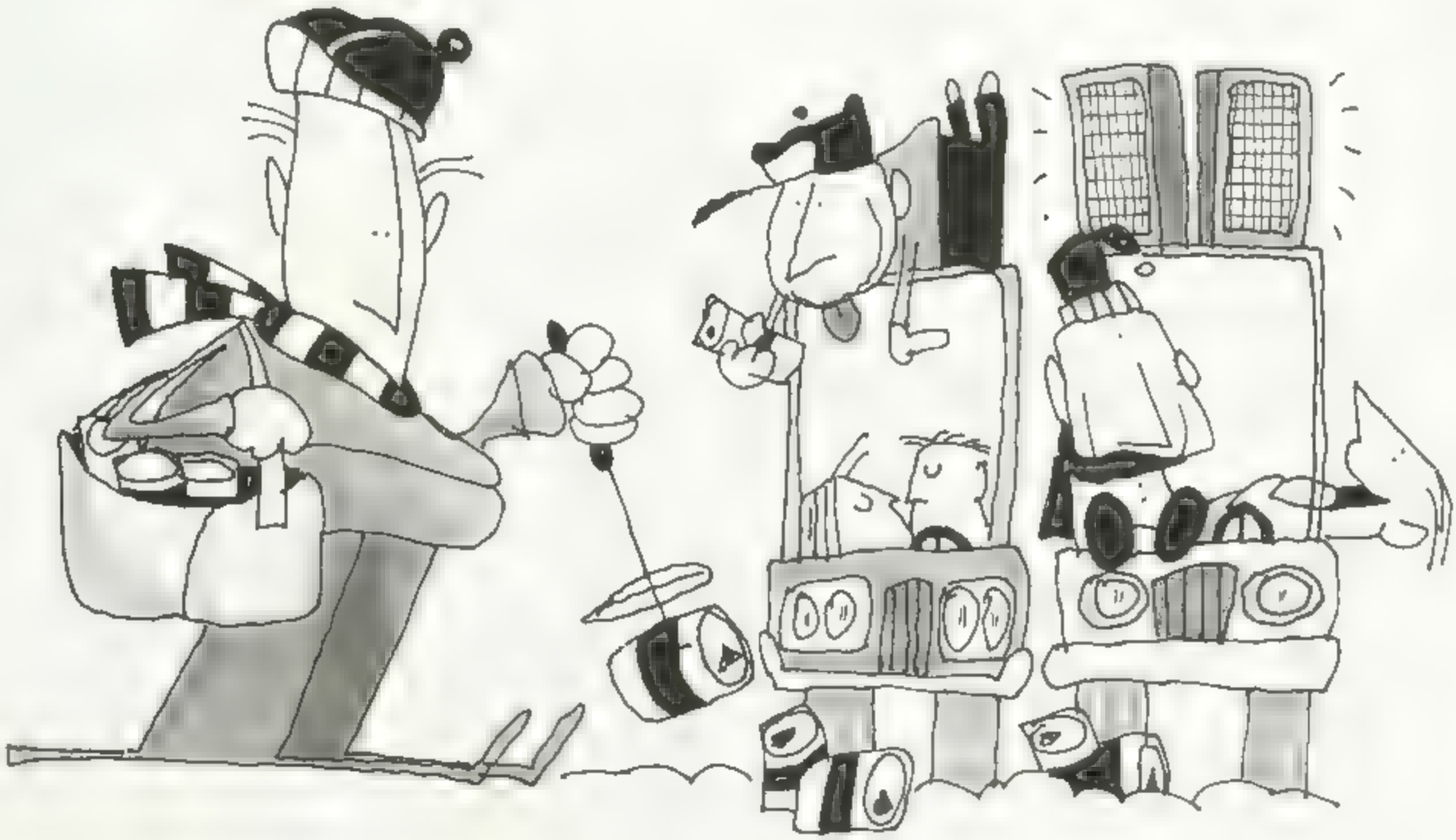
People who cross country ski are called GRANOLAS and they grow beards and recycle things and eat vegetables and ride mountain bikes on rainy nights. The Granolas and even some regular people have bought over 9 billion pairs of cross country skis since the sport became trendy in the late 60's. Only 14 of them have been used more than once.

Parking Lot Behavior

It is considered very bad taste to ski into parked cars. Likewise it is impolite to crack windshields of new BMW's with your skis when you turn around to greet friends. The proper procedure for finding your car in a crowded parking lot is to stay in the bar late until everyone else has left. Most afternoons, however, everyone else is also in the bar which makes this strategy ineffective.

Parking Lot Behavior

Assholes sit in their cars listening to loud rock and roll, and throw their beer cans and bottles into the snow banks. Every spring, in states where they have deposits, some local kids collect them all and earn enough to buy their own chairlift. Similarly, each Spring the town locksmith picks up all the keys lost in the lot during the season and is all set with his inventory for the next season. Hike under a chairlift in April or May and you'll find enough dropped poles, gloves and goggles to open a ski shop.

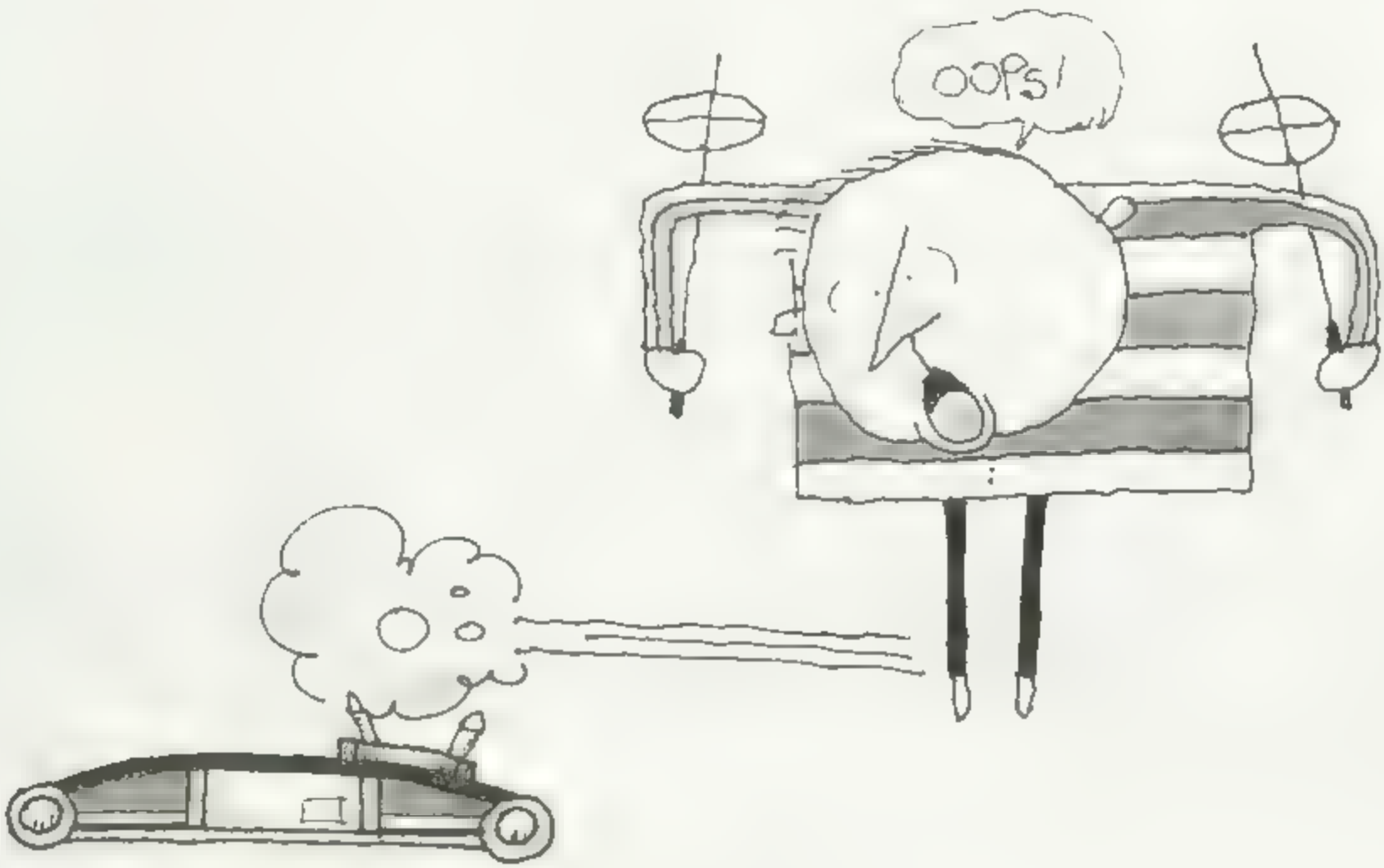


Preserving Your Ski Tops

Gross dorks on the lift line step on top of your new skis. They also step on top of old skis but that's not nearly as annoying. The proper response when this happens is to shuffle ahead a little with a loud snort and to glance over your shoulder. If they continue to be obnoxious, you turn and say, "OK, I'll ski on the bottoms, you ski on the tops." Then you poke them with your poles.

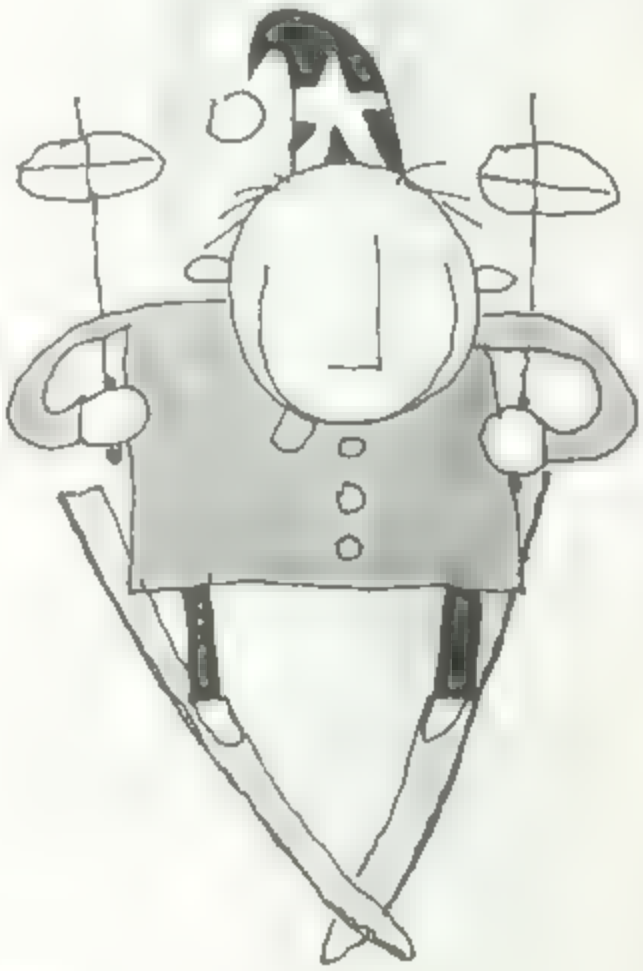
Ski Training Devices

My ski buddy Gene bought this ski trainer that he claims all the Olympic teams use. You jump back and forth on this arc of a thing that looks only slightly more dangerous than skiing steep icy tracks in the presence of snow boarders, and it's supposed to make you a champion. These machines are advertised each fall to get you in shape for skiing but by December they are stacked in garages gathering rust along with the exercise bikes, rowing machines and Nordic Tracks.



Rental Equipment

Rental skis and boots are usually no more beat up than your own stuff and for all you know, they may have had an edge sharpened and some wax applied during the year. But rental skis make the skier a pariah on the hill. Everyone knows the rental brands and markings and says to themselves "Watch out for that guy—he's on rentals." Skiers will scatter like mice when a renter skis towards them. No one talks to these people on the lifts.



D.I.N. Settings

My two sons, the hot racers, tell me the way to identify a really good skier on a chairlift is not the type of skis or length or the snazzy outfit, it's the D.I.N. setting on their bindings. D.I.N. is German for DUMKOPFS who INSIST on NUMBERING things. The higher the number, the greater force needed to release the bindings and the more macho the skier. You get to numbers around 20, that the racers use, and you have to fall going 60 mph, crash into a cement truck and probably rip your hip in half before the bindings release. This is a real cool setting.

Dweebs, Dorks and Turkeys

1. Bang their skis together on the lift
2. Stop in the middle of trails
3. Ride to the top and then look for "greenies" to get down on
4. Wear a wine skin over their shoulders
5. Save their lift tickets on their parkas

Driving to the Area

After "Where ya from?" and "Do you know...?" on a chairlift, the next most likely question is "How long does it take you to get here?" It takes me 3 hours from Boston to Vermont but on a lift you run into these people from Pennsylvania or Virginia who claim to make it in incredible times. "Really, 1500 miles in 4 1/2 hours—what kind of radar detector do you use?" Either these people have much faster cars than I do, have a very active fantasy life, or have discovered some sort of time warp on I-91.

These other books are available at many fine stores.

#2350 Sailing. Using the head at night • Sex & Sailing • Monsters in the Ice Chest • How to look nautical in bars and much more nautical nonsense.

#2351 Computers. Where computers really are made • How to understand computer manuals without reading them • Sell your old $2,000,000 computer for $60 • Why computers are always lonely and much more solid state computer humor.

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